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## A MESSAGE FROM MACo PRESIDENT Doug Kaercher

Has it ever occurred to you that a conference is like attending a play? There is an air of anticipation. You have the program but you aren't sure what will happen when the "play" actually begins.

At our midwinter conference, I believe we were successful at educating and exciting you. Harold Blattie, Sheryl Wood and staff deserve our gratitude for giving us quality presentations and information.

NACo President Bill Hansell was a definite asset to our agenda. His presidential initiative presentation named meth as a "rural" drug, so Montana had better watch out.

**"Methamphetamine is the number one cause for crime in Montana. Robbery. Prostitution. Child abuse. Our prisons are overflowing. Our children are at risk."** Mike McGrath, Montana Attorney General. If this statement is not enough for you to start action in your county, I don't know what is.

Cascade County was a gracious host and a special thanks goes to Director Tony Preite and the Department of Commerce for sponsoring this event.

One of the most important aspects of conferences is the opportunity to meet with like-minded people. It was good to share problems, to mix with each other and to become friends.

## MACo ASSOCIATION EVALUATION

With the unusual number of changes in MACo this past year, President Doug Kaercher felt it was an opportune time to conduct an in-depth evaluation of MACo's services.

In December, surveys were issued to counties asking them to help identify MACo's strengths, weaknesses, and how they ranked the core services.

With the assistance of Brian Cameron of CMS Services, the Board met in January for a planning session where they reviewed the survey responses. The Board conducted a full day in-depth evaluation of all of MACo's current services, operations and goals, and began working toward establishing future goals and objectives.

The survey responses reflected that MACo's strengths are providing quality services and programs, program accessibility, and communication. The greatest weakness is MACo's lack of sufficient resources to fulfill primary roles and responsibilities. Board members emphasized that MACo's legislative efforts, risk management and insurance programs, and education/information sharing are essential in meeting the needs and expectations of counties.

MACo's four core service areas were defined as:

(continued on next page)

## MACo EVALUATION AND PLANNING CONTINUED

1) legislation and policy, 2) education and information sharing, 3) meetings and conferences, and 4) publications.

Service goals include:

1) Pursue alternative funding sources including sponsorships, grants and optional fee based products and services to provide revenues for program enhancement

2) Promote interaction between elected officials through meetings and networking opportunities

3) Provide information to the membership by enhancing the newsletter to include more in-depth county information.

4) Updating and promoting MACo publications, including having them available for download from the website

5) Improve technology to provide interactive web relay chats on specialized topics such as roads, subdivisions, etc., and a FAQ section for counties to research and share information and resources. Provide centralized technology support services to counties.

A general outcome of the survey and the planning session was the realization that Association management and staff do a great job with the resources that are available. As needs for services grow, we must pursue alternative funding sources to be able to provide the increasing levels of services.

MACo's management and staff thank the Board for their continued support and guidance and encourage the membership to contact the office for information and/or assistance.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 4 - 8	NACo Annual Legislative Conference, D.C.
March 8	MACo Congressional Breakfast; DC; 8:30 am
March 9	Weed Meeting; Capitol
March 9-10	Interim Finance Committee; Capitol Rm. 102
March 10	HJR 11 Meeting; Capitol; 10:00 am
March 13	MACo Executive Committee, Conference Planning and Education Committees
March 23	Last day to file for county offices

### UPCOMING SCHEDULE

April 3-6	MACRS Convention; Great Falls
April 7-9	National Coalition of Forest Counties; Reno
April 5-7	Co. Superintendents of Schools; Fairmont
April 18-19	Joint JPA / JPIA Trustees Meeting
April 23-27	Magistrates Convention; Missoula

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MONTANA COUNTIES?

Recently, the 7th and 8th grades in Cardwell School submitted a series of questions about Montana Counties. They used the MACo website to develop their questions.

Submitted by Kellee Glaus and Amy Reavis  
Cardwell 8th grade

1. What are the names of the county commissioners in Wheatland County?
2. How many new fire trucks have been added to the Sweet Grass fire department?
3. What is the population of Fallon County?
4. What is the county seat of Ravalli County?
5. What is the size of Roosevelt County in square miles?
6. What three counties border Toole County?
7. What county makes up the "nose" of Montana?
8. What county is north of Mineral County?
9. In what county is the Cardwell School?
10. What is the address for Missoula County's courthouse?
11. What is the county seat of McCone County?
12. How many men are county commissioners in Butte-Silver Bow County?

(answers are found on page 11)

**NOTICE:** The following pages contain selections from information which was to be presented at a cancelled session for Commissioner Certification Training during Midwinter Conference. **PLEASE NOTE THE APPLICATION DEADLINES.**

Jim Edgcomb and Gus Byrom from Department of Commerce kindly submitted their presentation.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTY PROJECTS**

### **Community Development Block Grant**

#### **Montana Department of Commerce**

Grants must principally benefit low and moderate income (LMI) families (>51%).

#### **1) Planning Grants**

(Housing and Public Facilities)

**Applications due April 21, 2006** for FFY 2006 grants at \$15,000 maximum each with \$ for \$ match.

Grants can be used for:

- ❖ Growth Policies (Comprehensive Plans)
- ❖ Needs Assessments
- ❖ Income and/or Housing Surveys
- ❖ Grant Writing
- ❖ Engineering and/or Architectural Studies

#### **2) Public Facility Grants**

**Applications due May 26, 2006** for FFY 2007 grants at \$450,000 maximum each.

Grants can be used for:

- ❖ Basic infrastructure improvements (water, wastewater, solid waste facilities)
- ❖ Facilities designed for use predominantly by LMI persons – such as nursing homes, senior centers, Head Start centers, rural hospitals, or mental health centers

#### **3) Housing & Neighborhood Renewal Grants**

**Applications due Nov. 3, 2006** for FFY 2007 grants at \$450,000 maximum each.

Contact **Gus Byrom** 406-841-2777 or [gbyrom@mt.gov](mailto:gbyrom@mt.gov)  
Forms are at [http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD\\_CDBG.asp](http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD_CDBG.asp)

#### **4) Economic Development**

Open Cycle for Applications

Contact **Karyl Tobel** 406-841-2733 or [karylt@mt.gov](mailto:karylt@mt.gov)  
Forms can be found at:  
[http://businessresources.mt.gov/BRD\\_CDBG.asp](http://businessresources.mt.gov/BRD_CDBG.asp)

### **Treasure State Endowment Program**

#### **Montana Department of Commerce**

Funding for systems for drinking water, wastewater treatment, sanitary, storm sewer and/or solid waste and bridges

#### **1) Grants for Preliminary Engineering**

- ❖ Maximum amount \$15,000 with \$ for \$ match
- ❖ Priority given to first-time applicants
- ❖ Applications from 2005 grants will be processed June 1, 2006

**Apply for preliminary engineering grants after January 1, 2007.**

#### **2) Grants for Emergency Projects**

- ❖ Maximum amount \$30,000
- ❖ Must be a true **EMERGENCY**

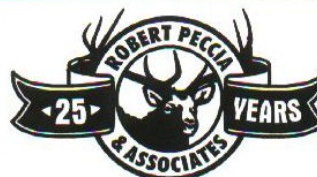
#### **3) Grants for Construction Projects**

- ❖ Applications accepted every other year
- ❖ \$750,000 limit per project with \$ for \$ match
- ❖ Limit of \$15,000 per household

**Apply for construction grants before May 5, 2006.**

Contact Jim Edgcomb 841-2785 or [jedgcomb@mt.gov](mailto:jedgcomb@mt.gov)  
Forms are at [http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD\\_TSEP.asp](http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD_TSEP.asp)

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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTY PROJECTS, Part 2

### Rural Development Loan & Grant Program



**For communities less than 10,000 population**

Loans can be re-paid over 40 years.  
Community facilities programs include  
guaranteed loans, direct loans and grants.  
All three can be combined on the same project  
depending on financial strength of the  
organization and project.

Contact Mitch Copp  
406-585-2520 or [mitchel.copp@mt.usda.gov](mailto:mitchel.copp@mt.usda.gov)

### Renewable Resource Grant & Loan Program

**Montana Department of Natural Resources  
& Conservation**

- ❖ \$100,000 - Renewable Resource Grants  
    ✓ \$4,000,000 Available Each Biennium
- ❖ \$10,000 - Preliminary Engineering Studies
- ❖ \$30,000 - Emergency Grants
- ❖ Loans Limited by Ability to Repay in 20 Years  
    Application deadline is May 15, 2006

For information contact:  
Bob Fischer, at 406-444-6688 or [rfischer@mt.gov](mailto:rfischer@mt.gov)  
Pam Smith, at 406-444-6839 or [pamsmith@mt.gov](mailto:pamsmith@mt.gov)  
Website <http://dnrc.mt.gov>

### DW & WPC State Revolving Funds



- 👍 No Deadlines - Can Apply at Anytime
- 👍 Be on Priority List & Intended Use Plan
- 👍 Low Interest Loans - Currently 3.75%
- 👍 20 Year Term

For more information contact:

Mark Smith, Drinking Water SRF  
406-444-5325 or [marks@mt.gov](mailto:marks@mt.gov)

Paul LaVigne, Pollution Control SRF  
406-444-5321 or [plavigne@mt.gov](mailto:plavigne@mt.gov)

Website <http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/srf/index.asp>

### Coal Board Grants Montana Department of Commerce

- ☐ Assists with mitigating local impacts created  
by large scale coal development or decline
- ☐ Includes coal-fired plants
- ☐ Total available per year - \$1.5 to \$1.9 million
- ☐ Board meets quarterly
- ☐ Criteria - need, severity of impact, availability  
of funds, degree of local effort

For information contact Joe LaForest

406-841-2789 or [jlaforest@mt.gov](mailto:jlaforest@mt.gov)

Website [http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD\\_CB.asp](http://comdev.mt.gov/CDD_CB.asp)

### Public Works Grants Economic Development Administration

- ☐ Water and sewer systems
- ☐ Historically, \$3 to \$5 million available per  
year for all projects
- ☐ Generally, grants do not exceed \$1 million
- ☐ Project must be tied to economic develop-  
ment, with actual jobs created
- ☐ Eight ranking criteria with emphasis on  
economic distress and job/cost ratio

For information contact John Rogers

406-449-5380 or [jrogers@eda.doc.gov](mailto:jrogers@eda.doc.gov)

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Billings, MT – 406.245.5499

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Jackson**  
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and Planners

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNTY PROJECTS Part 3**

### **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Grants U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

- ☐ Provides grants for water related projects in rural Montana including:  
Environmental infrastructure projects  
Resource protection projects
- ☐ 75% / 25% cost share
- ☐ Typically no more than \$1,500,000
- ☐ Limited time frame to spend funds
- ☐ Apply through Congressional delegation

For information contact  
Ed Haffke, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
402-221-3666 or [edward.o.haffke@usace.army.mil](mailto:edward.o.haffke@usace.army.mil)

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### **Rural Water Development Bureau of Reclamation**

Grants for drought related water development  
Water development projects  
Water conservation projects  
No match requirement  
No limits, but typically no more than \$150,000

For information contact Rick DeVore  
Great Plains Regional Office in Billings  
406-247-7757 or [RDEVORE@gp.usbr.gov](mailto:RDEVORE@gp.usbr.gov)

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### **Variable Rate Loan Program Montana Board of Investments**

- ✓ Apply anytime - Money always available
- ✓ Last year's rate: 3.8%
- ✓ Average Rate for past 10 Yrs: 4.16%
- ✓ Loan term – 10 years
- ✓ Loan for preliminary engineering
- ✓ Interest only for 3 years
- ✓ No up-front costs
- ✓ Prepayment without penalty

Call Louise Welsh – 444-0891

### **Other Funding Sources**

- ❖ [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)
- ❖ [www.mt.gov/business/grantsloans.asp](http://www.mt.gov/business/grantsloans.asp)
- ❖ Preservation Assistance Grants
- ❖ Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program
- ❖ FHA Emergency Relief for Federal Roads
- ❖ Federal Emergency Management Agency
- ❖ Local Option Motor Fuel Excise Tax (up to 2¢ by initiative or resolution / referral)
- ❖ Optional Motor Vehicle Tax (by election)
- ❖ Debt Financing Methods
  - ✓ Rural Improvement Districts
  - ✓ General Obligation Bonds
- ❖ U.S. Air Force (if bridge is on a primary route to a missile site)

### **GRANTS WORKSHOPS**

Grant planning workshops for water, wastewater, and solid waste projects will be held **March 2nd at the Holiday Inn in Missoula, and March 7th at the Sheraton Hotel in Billings.** The workshops start at 8:30 a.m. and are scheduled to adjourn at 4:00 p.m. The workshops are free and pre-registration is not required.

The workshops are sponsored by Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W<sub>2</sub>ASACT) and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), in conjunction with the Board of Investments, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The workshops will focus on the funding programs available to communities looking to upgrade their water and wastewater and solid waste systems. These programs include the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program, the Treasure State Endowment Program, the State Revolving Fund Loan Programs, the Rural Development Program, and the INTERCAP Program.

For more information visit the W<sub>2</sub>ASACT website at <http://dnrc.mt.gov/cadd/> or contact DNRC at 406-444-2074.

## KEEPING RECORDS: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

**By Kathy McGowan, Executive Director  
Montana Sheriff & Peace Officers Assoc.**

Several weeks ago Sheriff's Offices were asked to submit data to the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (MSPOA) office regarding the cost of transporting their mentally ill residents. We received no responses at all from some counties, estimates from others, specific data from some and admissions from others that this data was not collected.

So what's the big deal? The Montana Association of Counties, with the support of MSPOA, among others, is attempting to find alternatives and solutions to this mental health issue, among others. Meetings with the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division and with legislative committees have resulted in some interest in these issues. However, anecdotal information, wringing of hands, and wiping of brows isn't sufficient. They want some hard numbers in terms of what the costs really are.

We will not be asking again for this particular information, at least not in the near foreseeable future. The purpose of this article is not to point fingers, not to chastise, but simply to remind folks that we only are as powerful as the good, reliable information we can produce. It need not be complicated. In this case it can be as simple as logging trips, applying a formula of \$X for employee time and \$X for mileage.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### **OTTO JOSEPH JENSEN**

Otto Jensen, 78, former Fergus County Commissioner, died in January. Jensen served seventeen years as commissioner, from January 1969 through 1986. He had special interest in mental health issues and was particularly active with the Council on Aging and the Fergus County fairs. He served as MACo Second and First Vice President.

His wife, Betty, and three children and their families survive. His son, John, currently serves as a Fergus County Commissioner.

## IN MEMORIAM

### **KAY KIRK BECK**

Kay Beck, 65, former Powell County Commissioner, died February 17 after a short illness. She was appointed to the commission in January 1998 and served through 2002. She was active on the MACo Information Technology Committee.

Beck was an accomplished musician and artist. She specialized in the harp, watercolors and crafted paper arts. She is survived by her three children, their families and former husband, Tom, who served on the Powell County Commission and was MACo President in 1985.

# COUNTY NEWS

## MENTAL HEALTH COSTS SURVEY RESPONSES



Have you submitted your responses for the mental health cost survey? 23 out of 56 counties have responded but we need a more complete report. MACo is compiling this information for a presentation to the Children, Families, Health & Human Services Interim Committee on March 30.

### STAFF AND FACILITIES

**STILLWATER and CARBON COUNTIES** are considering sharing a compliance officer or misdemeanor probation officer position.

**POWDER RIVER COUNTY** Manor continues it's recruiting efforts for nurses and has increased hourly rates to \$21 for CNAs, \$31 for LPNs and \$38 for RNs.

**CASCADE COUNTY** combined 28 city polling places into 17 in preparation for a May 2 school board election.

**FLATHEAD COUNTY** rescinded its new requirement that Justice Court judges be licensed attorneys. No legal reference could be found to allow this requirement.

**STILLWATER COUNTY** purchased vacant commercial property to house the county attorney and support staff. The County hoped to alleviate rental payments.

**GRANITE COUNTY** plans to begin using a mothballed electrical generation plant, which was closed in 1990 and sold to the County for \$1. A Bozeman company won the bid to begin operation as soon as Federal approval is granted.

**DAWSON COUNTY** has received nine separate options for improving energy efficiency in the courthouse. Following an energy audit, recommendations included retrofitting lighting fixtures, upgrading the boiler system, replacing the emergency generator, adding temperature controls, replacing control valves for heating and cooling, upgrading the fire alarm system and planning for regular maintenance. Each recommendation can be implemented and paid for separately.

### NEW OFFICIAL

**PETROLEUM COUNTY's** new Sheriff is John W. Taylor.

### LAND USE

**FLATHEAD COUNTY**, for the 11th time in two years, has prevailed in a land use planning lawsuit relating to a gravel pit and a nearby residential area.

**MISSOULA COUNTY's** plan for a county-wide open-space bond is opposed by a group of Swan Valley residents who fear higher property taxes to "subsidize conservation easements". Meanwhile 6,000 acres in Swan Valley have recently received a conservation easement designation using federal funding.

### FOR SALE

Rosebud County is accepting sealed bids for the sale of one used 1983 Caterpillar 140G road grader, VIN# 72V6954. Bids will be opened at the Commissioners Office on March 15th, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. Minimum bid of \$32,000.00 required. 346-2261

### 2006 DIRECTORY ADDITIONS

#### **TREASURE COUNTY**

Commissioner Mack Cole email [colemj@rangeweb.net](mailto:colemj@rangeweb.net)

#### **BUTTE-SILVER BOW**

Commissioner Wally Frasz email [wfrasz@bresnan.net](mailto:wfrasz@bresnan.net)

#### **CHOUTEAU COUNTY**

Clerk of Court Larry Stollfuss email [lstollfuss@mt.gov](mailto:lstollfuss@mt.gov)

**WHEATLAND COUNTY's** new central phone number is 632-4891, with the corresponding extensions:

Commissioners	Extension 301
Clerk and Recorder	Ext. 301
Clerk of Court	Ext. 315
Justice of Peace	Ext. 307
School Superintendent	Ext. 306
Treasurer	Ext. 302



# MACo COMMITTEE REPORTS

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

submitted by Cynthia Johnson, Pondera County

Sheryl Wood reported on Department of Commerce's efforts to decommission **mobile homes** in order to expedite transfer to landfill sites. Issues include asbestos testing and mitigation, appropriate disposal of appliances and fixtures, funding and potential for meth labs sites.

Joe McClure, Big Sky Economic Development Association, briefly reported on legislative activities and efforts being explored by MEDA including **Micro-business Program, Local Option Tax, and Incumbent Worker Training**. There is potential to lift the ceiling on resort taxes to allow each community to set its own rate. This could be a form of local option tax. Holding Federal Unemployment Taxes for a longer period could generate interest income for Incumbent Worker Training.

Charles Brooks, representative of Yellowstone County, reminded us of the importance of pursuing **methane gas development**. Mack Cole reported that the Board of Environmental Review is considering a couple of proposals from the Northern Plains Resource Council, which would devastate methane gas production. He recommended that the Committee to work to defeat these proposals. Mack will draft language for a letter of support, petition and resolution for the promotion of methane gas production. Adam Gartner believes a big effort needs to be made to educate the public about the benefit of methane gas production.

Joe McClure believes we need to be vigilant about **Wrongful Discharge** Laws because they may get worse before they get better. The Committee needs to take an active role along with MACo.

Lance Olson, representing the Resolutions Committee, alerted us regarding **stream access at county bridges**, and issue which may be passed on to the Committee.

Tony Preite, Department of Commerce Director, commended the group on their effort to develop good relationships and share limited resources. He also discussed the Department of Labor / Department of Commerce's successful joint grant application for **economic development dollars** (\$15,000,000 over a 3 year period). Other economic development district funds which were recently recognized but not funded will receive some funding (\$50,000 – \$53,000/ year) and access to additional trust funding.

## LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

1. **Bridges** – public access; Committee will work with MACo Public Lands and Transportation Committees
2. **State of Art Repository** – Issue dead
3. **State Sales Tax** --John Jensen will contact State Representative Peterson.
4. One Stop Shopping for **financial information and assistance** – Mack Cole reported he has discussed the issue with MACo staff and they are considering possible solutions.
5. **Taxing Conservation Easements** using the value of the property right--no action but will follow the issue
6. **Frivolous Lawsuits** -- no action; will use another route to resolve
7. **Property class 15** for waste area management -- proposed legislation is coming
8. **Incumbent Worker Training** – Issue dead

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# MACo COMMITTEE REPORTS

## TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**John Ostlund, Chair, Yellowstone County**

1. Resolution to increase the cap for County Road and Bridge Capitol Fund over \$500,000

Some stand-alone bridge projects cost over that amount and each piece of new equipment may cost several hundred thousand dollars.

2. Montana Code 7-14-2205: This requires a municipality to go to the voters for a bridge that costs more than \$10,000. We need to clean this up since Counties are responsible for all bridge construction even in incorporated cities.

3. County owned Fuel Tanks

Each individual County will need to address the requirements for bulk fuel deliveries and storage.

4. Clear fuel requirements will be addressed in our bidding process. (*previous MACo email*)

5. The Theodore Roosevelt Expressway

Concern from the Eastern Counties that this highway route will by-pass eastern Montana led to discussion with congressional staff. Conrad Burn's office will look into this issue.

6. Contracts for Bridge & Highway Projects

The county contracts with MDOT need to follow best management practices and manage the silt fencing after completion of an off system or secondary road project. Many counties feel they must sign the contracts or lose the projects.

7. SB 222: Several suggested that diesel fuel be added to the allowable 2¢ local option fuel tax to fund Road / Bridge departments. Likely the trucking industry would view this as a pass through and it could be a struggle in the legislature.

8. RSIDs: Not only can 51% of the residents protest out of a RSID, but there may also be a way for over 50% of the property valuation to protest out. (*HB 431 changed previous methods.*)

9. Reservation Road Inventory Agreement

The reservation counties have agreed that this agreement can be signed by individual counties. It will allow the BIA to inventory all county roads on the reservations for a separate source of funding that will not affect gas tax allocation or reflect in the transportation bills.

## RESERVATION COUNTIES

**Submitted by Cynthia Johnson, Pondera County**

MOU for Reservation Roads: The escape clause included by Sara Bond, Governor's office, and approved by Chair Gary Macdonald has made the agreement complete.

### Questions

- 1) If the county signs the MOU with the BIA and a tribe splits with the BIA to manage its own roads, can a county enter an MOU with the tribe?  
Yes
- 2) Is the BIA the initiating agency to submit the roads for the inventory?  
Yes.

The BIA receives funds in each state, but tribes could enter into 638 agreements to receive those dollars in a lump sum for transportation. The funds addressed in each agreement must be used for the purpose intended.

Chairman Macdonald shared the inventory process being undertaken by Roosevelt County. Gary Hall distributed a copy of Lake County's agreement with Kootenai-Salish Tribes as an example of what the second stage of a road inventory agreement would look like for construction purposes.

The motion to approve the MOU for use by Reservation Counties regarding Road Inventory Agreement was seconded and carried.

Chair Macdonald will report to the Rocky Mountain Great Plains Transportation Regional Meeting that Montana Reservation Counties agreed to use this format to enter into road inventory agreements with reservations.

Chair Macdonald discussed bridge funds available for bridge maintenance on reservations. Apparently, engineering costs are now included and interested parties should contact their appropriate BIA office.

## MACo COMMITTEE REPORTS PUBLIC LANDS

### **RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE JOINT RESOLUTION TO AFFIRM THE GRAY WOLF A PREDATOR SPECIES IN NEED OF MANAGE- MENT IN BEAVERHEAD, CARBON, GALLATIN, MADISON, PARK, STILLWATER, AND SWEET GRASS COUNTIES**

**WHEREAS**, the Public Lands Committee of the Montana Association of Counties has voted unanimously at their February 2006 meeting to support the joint resolution presented on behalf of the above counties; and

**WHEREAS**, Montana livestock producers have suffered substantial losses due to predation by wolves; and

**WHEREAS**, a working group of Montana citizens and agencies has developed the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program, which has generated a reimbursement program for losses caused by gray wolves, yet the program does not yet have a Board or source of funding;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Public Lands Committee of the Montana Association of Counties joins in support of the joint resolution between these counties and in support of efforts made in seeking funding through appropriations for the Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program and the management of gray wolves.

**SIGNED AND DATED** this 16th day of February 2006 at the Midwinter meeting of the Montana Association of Counties.

Connie Eissinger, Chair

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**for Public Entities**

**Greg Jackson**

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## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Emelia McEwen

MACo Risk Management Assistant

By performing musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) risk assessments in the workplace, county departments can make ergonomic changes before the risks turn into costly injuries and workers compensation payments. An assessment looks at body risk factors such as job tasks and workstations and, ultimately, will help identify who may be at risk for injuries.

To perform a risk assessment, focus on how many job tasks are used in a job, assessing one task at a time. If too many tasks are scored at once, everything will be scored as high risk. Watch an employee's entire body during work to identify the forces and weights the worker must overcome. Posture, force and repetition have been identified as the leading causes of MSDs. Be sure to quantify the duration of a task, as well as the repetition.

**What risks do you see?** Is the worker's body angle locked in a static posture for more than 20 seconds at a time? Are the elbows above shoulder height?

**What injuries would you expect to see in the job?** Seated computer workers tend to lunge forward while they work. This puts stress on their neck and shoulders, creating muscle fatigue. Is there contact with hard surfaces with the hands, wrists, legs or waist?

**What is the duration or frequency?** Repetitive motion tasks which are performed several times per day will have a higher risk than occasional tasks.

**What is the cost to abate the risk?**

**How many workers perform the task?**

Once the risks are identified, changes can be made to improve employee health:

**Alter schedules:** Consider moving schedules to reduce heavy cycles on any one day

**Eliminate productivity incentives:** Workers may take unnecessary risks in an effort to increase production to earn incentives.

**Implement job / task rotation:** Allow workers to change job tasks during their workdays. If the job requires a copious amount of standing, consider alternating some desk tasks during the work day.



## Get Ready for National County Government Week April 23-29

National County Government Week is just around the corner.

This year's theme

### Protecting Our Communities

sets the stage for a special focus on all the ways counties work to protect their residents from the impact of natural disasters, terrorist attacks, crime, and drug abuse.

Go to [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) for suggestions and ideas for your county to use to celebrate.

## 5 ☆ RESTORATION GRANT

NACo and the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program are accepting applications for the 2006 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants. The Five Star Program provides modest financial assistance on a competitive basis to support wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects that foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. The Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program is a partnership between NACo, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Wildlife Habitat Council, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency--EPA.

In 2005, 53 projects received grants averaging \$10,000 each. In Montana, **Cascade County** was awarded funds for the Lower Sun River Restoration Project and **Flathead County** was funded for the Vo-ag Center Streambank Preservation Project.

**The deadline for applications is March 10.**

For more information visit

[www.naco.org/techassistance](http://www.naco.org/techassistance) or contact Erik Johnston at 202-942-4246 or [ejohnston@naco.org](mailto:ejohnston@naco.org)

### MONTANA COUNTIES--ANSWER KEY

1. Tom Bennett, Richard Moe, and David Miller
2. One
3. 2,114 people
4. Hamilton
5. 2,386 sq. miles
6. Glacier, Pondera, and Liberty Counties
7. Ravalli County
8. Sanders County
9. Jefferson County
10. 200 West Broadway, Missoula, Montana
11. Circle
12. Eleven

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# Montana - Canada Border Facilitating Travel and Trade

from Michelle Mikoljak, US-VISIT Outreach and Public Liaison Team

New security procedures at the U.S.-Canada land border are making the border crossing experience more secure, convenient and faster for low-risk international visitors.

US-VISIT uses technology to collect biographic and biometric information, which makes it virtually impossible for anyone to steal a visitor's identity in order to cross the border and provides significant security measures to protect the individual's privacy. Most visitors experience US-VISIT's biometric procedures – digital, inkless finger scans and a digital photograph – upon entry to the United States. The enrollment process is fast, easy to understand and simple for visitors.

Most Canadian citizens are exempt from US-VISIT and are not subject to the US-VISIT process at this time. Permanent residents of

Canada, who require a Form I-94 arrival / departure record to enter the United States, are required to enroll in US-VISIT.

The program has already identified criminals and immigration violators who otherwise could have been granted admission into the U.S.

US-VISIT conducted meetings along the U.S.-Canada land border as part of its commitment to work with border communities so that the program is developed in the right way and at the appropriate pace. These meetings provide local communities opportunities to learn about the US-VISIT, including the development of automated entry and exit procedures, and for US-VISIT to hear from border communities.

For more information, please visit

[www.dhs.gov/us-visit](http://www.dhs.gov/us-visit)

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